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Poetic Pandemic

Otterbein University Theatre and Dance Department

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OTTERBEIN COLLEGE
DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE AND DANCE

Presents

Poetic Pandemic

by KIA CORTHON

Directed by
CHRISTINA KIRK

Scenic Design
CARMEN ROWLANDS

Costume Design
MAUREEN STROBEL

Lighting Design
COREY VERDUSCO

Sound Design
WES JENKINS

November 16-18, 2006
Campus Center Theatre

theatre at Otterbein

CAP & DAGGER

(Part of a series celebrating the centennial of theatre at Otterbein College)

The student organization Cap & Dagger, was formed in 1921, and performed its first full-length play in the spring of 1927, *If I Were King*. With the purpose of fostering dramatics on the Otterbein campus, Cap & Dagger members serve a variety of functions including fundraising, recruiting, mentorship, and event planning.

After participation either behind the scenes or on stage in one quarter of study, students are automatically enrolled in Cap & Dagger. Club activities have most recently included a student produced Drag Show for the entire campus, coordination of the Broadway Cares, Equity Fights AIDS fundraiser, management of the production concession sales, and organization of the department's annual spring banquet.

Club officers meet regularly to discuss current activities and the general morale of the student body. A representative of Cap & Dagger is present at faculty meetings and Theatre Advisory Board meetings to provide a student voice to the issues at hand.

special thanks

Melissa L. Davis, L.E.H.A.

Special thanks to the Board of Trustees, Otterbein College, Inc.

cast

Cars	Chris Austin
Raybo	Keeshon Morrow
Claudie/Mrs. Greene	Ayaunna Bibb
Grace	Jo Jordan
Laine/Wife	Tori Alexander
Tommy	Lilian Matsuda
Carson/Jacks/Parcel Carrier/Old Man 1/Walter/Nurse	Ray Thompson
Parcel Carrier/Old Man 3/Dex/Husband	Matthew Reed
Parcel Carrier/Ronald Reagan/Winston/Marvin/Old Man 2/Elderly Man ...	Nick Caruso
Joy/CR/Elderly Woman	Clare Schmidt

production team

Artistic Advisor	Ed Vaughan
Audience Services Director	Elizabeth Saltzgiver
Production Manager	Becky Morrison
Movement Coach	Melinda Murphy
Dialect Consultant	Melissa Bell
Stage Manager	Kelley Monts de Oca
Technical Director	Richard Dwyer
Scenic Studio Supervisor	Richard Uhrick
Costume Shop Supervisor	Marcia Hain
Assistant Director	Amanda Cappello
Rehearsal Assistant	Kathlene Boone
Assistant Technical Director	Peter Sichko
Master Painter	Carmen Rowlands
Master Electrician	Dieter Willis
Light Board Operator	Kolby Kindle
Props Master	Sarah Taylor
Wardrobe Master	Alyssa Pence
Sound Operator	Wes Jenkins
House Manager	Kari Ringer
Box Office Manager	Kelley Monts de Oca

director's note

I've been thinking a lot lately about the connection between what we think matters and what we are willing to do about it. Is it possible to live our lives in such a way that we are not only asking the right questions of ourselves, but also then having the courage to follow through on what we believe is right? And what do we do when our core beliefs about what is ethical come in direct conflict with the people we love? How can we keep loving and supporting them without compromising our core values? Is it possible to live a truly examined and ethical life?

Kia Corthron has written a play about people who are living these questions. For them, it is not only an ethical imperative, it is a driving force. Two brothers and their mother are trying to figure out how they can live up to their father's and husband's example. In so doing, they come up against themselves, their core beliefs and each other. As the sparks fly, we too, are asked to examine what we think is ethical, what we think love is. Along the way we are faced with some vital questions. What can a person in the United States expect out of the current health care system? What are the costs to reform this system? What are the costs if we don't? And how can we live with those consequences?

While there is a clear political agenda here, this is not agit-prop theatre. What Kia Corthron gives us are fully realized, complicated and complex people trying to grapple with the hard questions at the core of what it is to be human.

I am deeply grateful for this incredible opportunity to stage the world premiere of this important and ground-breaking play. When I first experienced Kia's writing in grad school at Columbia University, I knew I was in the presence of a powerful and profound writer. Since that time she has become one of the most important political writers of our day. I thank Dennis Romer for having the good sense to invite her back to Otterbein for a second production. And I am indebted to Kia for writing a play with such power and depth. I hope you are as affected by the material as I have been.

—Christina Kirk

production team

Scenic Studio Assistants & Construction Crew

Matthew Buettner, Richard Dwyer, Micah Harvey, David Kerr, Kyle Robertson, Peter Sichko,
Sarah Taylor, Jake Widman, Dieter Willis

Scenic Studio Participation Students

Caitlin Boninsegna, Kathlene Boone, Jennifer Brunker, Andrew Cotton, Eric Folks,
Jay Milhem, Alex Raabe, Christina Scariano, Anastasia Kalan, Kohy Washington,
Mary Ferut, Micah Harvey

Set and Props Running Crew

Kohy Washington, Anastasia Kalan, Jay Milhem

Lighting Assistants

Corey Verduco, Jayson Pritchard, Andy Baker

Electrics Crew

Andrew Betz, Rachel Graham, Nathan Keen, David Kerr, Kolby Kindle, Caitlin Scott,
Caroline Whetzel, Lauren Williams

Wardrobe Crew

Claire Longest, Jake Widman, Laura Fickley

Box Office Assistants

Cait Boninsegna, Megan Bruno, Erik Christensen, Lucas Dixon, Nicole Lehman,
Rachel Wulber

**There will be one 15-minute intermission
during this performance.**

special thanks

Matthew L. Dapore, L.N.H.A.
Westerville Center for Rehabilitation & Nursing Care, Inc.

playwright's note

Graduate school at Columbia University brought me to New York, where I met my soon-to-be lifelong friend Chris Kirk. As a new professor at Otterbein, she introduced my writing to the rest of the faculty, ultimately resulting in Otterbein's production in '95 of *Catnap Allegiance*, directed by Ed Vaughan. When, a decade later, Dennis Romer asked me to return to Westerville to work on a co-commission between Otterbein and Cincinnati Playhouse, I was thrilled, remembering how incredibly talented the students were.

I had been interested in addressing the health industry in some capacity. Generally my plays have had African Americans at their center, and I was concerned that Otterbein may not be able to fill the roles, but Dennis advised me not to worry, that we would just cast the play color blind. As the story was forming on paper, it wasn't until I realized it would need to focus around several family generations – and the unlikelihood that 60-year-old undergrads would be available to me – that I was truly able to free myself to write the play and trust that casting would take care of itself later. It has, beautifully. Chris and I simply went with the students who seemed most connected with the roles. This did result in a race-“correct” cast for most parts, but not all. I am awed by and proud of my actors, and thank every one of them for creating *Poetic Pandemic* for me.

– KC

profiles

Kia Corthron (Playwright) was last produced at Otterbein College when Ed Vaughan directed *Catnap Allegiance* in 1995. *Poetic Pandemic* was co-commissioned by Otterbein and Cincinnati Playhouse. Other plays include *Moot the Messenger* (Actors Theatre of Louisville's Humana Festival), *Light Raise the Roof* (New York Theatre Workshop), *Snapshot Silhouette* (Minneapolis' Children's Theatre Company), *Slide Glide the Slippery Slope* (ATL Humana, Mark Taper Forum), *The Venus de Milo Is Armed* (Alabama Shakespeare Festival), *Breath, Boom* (London's Royal Court Theatre, Playwrights Horizons, Yale Repertory Theatre, Huntington Theatre and elsewhere), *Force Continuum* (Atlantic Theater Company), *Splash Hatch on the E Going Down* (New York Stage and Film, Baltimore's Center Stage, Yale Rep, London's Donmar Warehouse), *Seeking the Genesis* (Goodman Theatre, Manhattan Theatre Club), *Digging Eleven* (Hartford Stage Company), *Life by Asphyxiation* (Playwrights Horizons), *Wake Up Lou Riser* (Delaware Theatre Company), *Come Down Burning* (American Place Theatre), *Cage Rhythm* (Sightlines/The Point in the Bronx). Awards include the Barbara Barondess MacLean Foundation Award, the AT&T On Stage Award, the Daryl Roth Creative Spirit Award, the Mark Taper Forum's Fadiman Award, National Endowment for the Arts/TCG, Kennedy Center Fund for New American Plays, the New Professional Theatre Playwriting Award, and the Callaway Award. Kia has been developing *Tap the Leopard* with Minneapolis' Guthrie Theater, inspired by her Guthrie-sponsored trip to Liberia in 2004 as the nation was coming out of its civil war. She is an alumnus of New Dramatists.

profiles

Tori Alexander (Laine/Wife) is excited to be in her first Otterbein production, but she is no virgin to the stage. She has been in productions of Rodgers & Hammerstein's *Cinderella* (Cinderella), *Guys and Dolls* (Adelaide) and *42nd Street* (Chorus). She is a junior Theatre BA major and enjoys every moment in the department. She would like to thank her family for their wonderful support and love, the cast of *Poetic Pandemic* for being so encouraging and Chris Kirk for just being a doll!

Chris Austin (Cars) is an Otterbein Alum of 2006 graduating with a BA in Theatre. Chris now works for Mills/James Productions in the Field/Studio video production department. Chris can next be seen in the CATCO production of *The Piano Lesson* directed by Otterbein Theatre professor Ed Vaughan. *The Piano Lesson* can be seen at the Riffe Center in downtown Columbus. Chris would like to thank The Lord, his mother, Jaime, the cast, and Chris Kirk and Kia for the wonderful opportunity to work on such a challenging and close-to-home hitting show.

Ayaunna Bibb (Claudie/ Mrs. Greene) feels privileged to have the chance to not only work on a wonderful show but also to be able to bring to life the work of Kia Corthron. She would like to thank Kia and Chris for their creative juices; Melissa for letting her never give up on herself and for the encouragement - "Muah!"; Melinda for being awesome; and everyone else who helped put this production on its feet. She would also like to thank the cast for their hard work during this rough time; her Kappa pretties; the luscious lady lumps of the cottage, especially Ms. Daniels - "Let's go get a smoothie from Wal-Mart after this."; the BFA class of '08 - "Camera ON!"; God, her family, Rose, Dorothy, Sophie and Blanchie; and, last but not least, herself for being fa-bool "en ee ooh ohml"

Kathlene Boone (Rehearsal Assistant) is a freshman BA Directing student and is beyond thrilled to be involved in her first learning and leadership position at Otterbein College. She recently graduated from The School for Creative and Performing Arts in Cincinnati where she majored in Acting, and minored in Stage Management. Some of her favorite projects have included acting as the Assistant Director for *A Piece of My Heart* (2006), Assistant Director for *The Tempest* (2005), and Stage Manager for *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (Abridged)* (2005). She would like to bow at the feet of Chris Kirk, Kelley Monts de Oca, and Becky Morrison for making this opportunity available, and for keeping her grounded. She would also like to express many thanks to Kia Corthron for her touching, poignant piece.

Amanda Cappello (Assistant Director) is a senior double majoring as a BA Theatre and Broadcasting student from Canton. Her last assistant directing credits include *Necessary Targets* and *Watchdog*. She recently finished assistant directing Sam Jaegar's film *Untold*. This summer she interned at Robert DeNiro's film company, Tribeca Productions, where she plans to return after she graduates this June. Amanda would like to thank Chris, Kia, the cast, her family, and her sisters of Theta Nu sorority for their tireless love and support.

profiles

Marcia Hain (Costume Shop Supervisor) has been a member of the Otterbein Theatre Tech Staff since 1989. She runs the costume shop full time and has also designed for the productions of *Harvey*, Dance 2006: *Street Fest*, *You're A Good Man Charlie Brown*, Dance 2005 *Passions*, *The Ugly Duckling + 2*, *The Music Man*, *Schoolhouse Rock*, *Live!*, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, *A Guy*, *A Girl and Gershwin*, *Blithe Spirit*, *The Secret Garden*, *Oklahoma*, *Hay Fever*, Dance 2000, *Pinocchio*, *How The Other Half Loves*, *Once Upon A Mattress*, 1776, *A Few Good Men*, and *Sherlock's Last Case*. She also served as Associate Designer for *Phantom*. Ms. Hain has an extensive background in Home Economics as well as commercial costuming and free-lance design and construction.

Melinda Murphy (Movement Coach) teaches Alexander Technique and Feldenkrais Method® in the Otterbein Theatre and Dance Department, with application to movement, voice, characterization, singing and dance. Melinda is one of the few teachers trained in both methods; she combines them in her private practice in Columbus, and in classes and seminars for performing artists at other Ohio colleges. Since coming to Otterbein, she also trained to teach Fitzmaurice Voicework for its specialized tools for improving the voice and breath. Melinda has coached Otterbein productions since the turn of the century. She has also coached equestrians, figure skaters, musicians, and competitive barbershop quartets and choruses including the two-time international gold medalist Southern Gateway Chorus.

Melissa Bell (Dialect Consultant) teaches speech, dialects, and theatre history in the Department of Theatre and Dance at Otterbein College. She also serves as the resident speech and dialects coach for all productions. Some favorite Otterbein credits include *Violet*, *The Women of Lockerbie*, *Crimes of the Heart*, *The Merchant of Venice*, and *Necessary Targets*. Earlier this year, she coached the dialects for Ohio Wesleyan University's production of *Noises Off* and this winter she will coach the dialects for Denison University's production of *Homebody/Kabul*. Melissa holds an M.F.A. in Acting from the combined program of Carnegie Mellon University and the Moscow Art Theatre in Russia and a B.F.A. in Acting from Carnegie Mellon. She is a founding company member of the American Studio Theatre in New York City and also served as the company's resident voice and speech coach. Favorite roles include Marina in *Volodya* (LaMama E.T.C.), Margaret in *Richard III* and Emilia in *Othello* (AST), Clytemnestra in *The Greeks* (Moscow Art Theatre), and the title role in *Miss Julie* (CMU). Melissa is a member of the Voice and Speech Trainers Association (VASTA).

Richard A. Uhrick (Scenic Studio Supervisor) is in his fourth season at Otterbein College. Before his return to his alma mater, he worked in Regional Theatres across the Midwest and New England including Actors Theatre of Louisville, Merrimack Repertory Theatre, New American Theatre, Kansas City Repertory Theatre (at UMKC), and The Court Theatre in Chicago. He received his Master's in Theatre Technology from UMKC in 1997. He now lives in Columbus with his wife Lisa. They work with Ohio Pug Rescue to provide abandoned or surrendered Pugs [dogs] foster homes.

profiles

Christina Kirk's (Director) directing credits include work at The Living Theatre and New Dramatists in New York, as well as assisting Liviu Ciulei at Arena Stage in Washington, D.C. Recent productions at Otterbein include *Necessary Targets* and *The Women of Lockerbie*. And this past summer she directed *Harvey* for Otterbein Summer Theatre. Kirk received her M.F.A. in Directing from Columbia University in New York and her B.F.A. in acting from the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana. Kirk's performance credits include the Joseph Jefferson award winning *Kabuki Medea* directed by Shozo Sato. She has also performed at the Nebraska Repertory Theatre, CATCO and Otterbein Summer Theatre. Favorite performance projects include *Three Tall Women* at CATCO, *Medea* at Otterbein, and her one woman show, *Conversations with Judith Malina*, reviewed in the March 2006 Theatre Journal. She is particularly excited about this opportunity to collaborate with her dear friend, Kia Corthron, on this powerful new play.

Carmen Rowlands (Scenic Designer/Master Painter) is a junior Design/Tech major with a focus in scenic and lighting design from Bowling Green. She's excited to be designing her first realized production at Otterbein. Past scenic credits include *42nd Street* (Deck Chief), *The Dinner Party* (Deck Chief), and Otterbein Summer Theatre 2005 (Technical Apprentice). She would like to thank Rob and Chris for their guidance; her fellow designers for the experience; and her friends, family, Garst Girls, Jordan, and the sisters of Theta Nu for their love, patience and support.

Maureen Strobel (Costume Designer) is a junior Design/Tech student with a focus in costume technology and scenic design. This is her first design credit at Otterbein. Previous credits include Wardrobe Master for *42nd Street*, stitcher for the Otterbein costume shop, and Stitcher/Run Crew for the Colorado Shakespeare Festival. Thanks to her extremely supportive professors, Chris, the costume shop, the Crazy P, the sisters of Theta Nu Sorority, and, most importantly, the family, for all the love and support.

Corey Verduco (Lighting Designer) is a transfer BFA Design Technology student. He started at this year as the Stage Manager for Company after his previous work at Otterbein as an Assistant Stage Manager for *Prelude to a Kiss* and production assistant for *Leaving Iowa* and *42nd Street*. His work outside of the department has included touring with Ringling Brothers Circus and ESPN 50/50 tour. His design credits have included Doobie Brothers at DTE Energy Theatre, Boxing for Fox Net sports, and other regional events, most recently a production of *Fame*; Corey will also be designing *Seussical the Musical* an upcoming show for Midland High School. Corey has helped to lead his high school to two state competitions in One-Act theatre and continues to help them as a consultant. He transferred here after attending Purchase College in New York and is extremely happy to continue his education and contribute his growing skills to Otterbein College.

profiles

Nick Caruso (Ronald Reagan/Winston/Marvin/Old Man 2/Elderly Man/Parcel Carrier) is a senior BA Theatre major/ Music minor from Muskegon, MI. Recent Otterbein performances include *42nd Street* (Oscar), *Jesus Christ Superstar* (Priest/Guard), and *The Music Man* (Farmer/Ensemble). Nick can also be seen giving campus tours and singing with the Otterbein Concert Choir. He aspires to pursue work in the TV/film world upon graduation and he will be completing his second industry-related internship during the winter term. Nick is extremely proud to help premiere Kia's new work with this talented and fun cast (strong enough?). He sends thanks to Kia, Chris, cast/crew, IIC rooomies, friends, Mo, and his amazing family. "I love you all."

Richard Dwyer (Technical Director) is a senior Design Technology major. He has worked on productions both educationally and professionally. At Otterbein College he has held various roles including Master Carpenter for the critically acclaimed *42nd Street*, to Assistant Technical Director. Richard is a proud member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. and holds the position Director of Educational Activities. Richard also serves as Co-President of Men of Vision (MOV), a male leadership organization in its first year of operation on Otterbein's campus. Richard will be on internship next quarter at the Indiana Repertory Theatre, in Indianapolis, IN where he will work as a carpenter. Upon graduation Richard will commission as a Second Lieutenant in the U.S. Military and will proudly serve in the U.S. Army.

Jo Jordan (Grace) is a senior BFA Acting major from Iowa City, IA. She has previously been seen at Otterbein in *Anton in Show Business*, *The Women of Lockerbie*, *Merchant of Venice*, and *Watchdog*. Next quarter, she will be interning for "The War at Home" in LA, 3,000 miles away from the rest of her classmates. Jo would like to thank Kia for the amazing play; Chris for making her open her pores; Melissa for fixing her words and being awesome; and, last but not least, her homeboy, Jesus Christ. She dedicates this performance to the talented BFA class of 2007.

Lilian Matsuda (Tommy) is a senior Musical Theatre major from Westerville. Previous credits include *Leaving Iowa* (super utility player), *Dance Concert 2006: Street Fest* (co./ student choreographer), *Necessary Targets* (JS), *Jesus Christ Superstar* (Judas dancer), *Ugly Duckling* +2 (Tina), and *The Dinner Party* (Gabrielle). This summer Lilian had the privilege of working at the Tony-ward winning Utah Shakespearean Festival, performing in the *Greenshow* and *HMS Pinafore*. This next quarter she will be interning at Jay Binder Casting in NYC. Lilian is very thankful to be involved in the first production of *Poetic Pandemic*, and she sends many thanks to Kia, Chris, the cast and crew, her Kappa Babes, her senior BFA class, her loving family; and especially her Obachan who makes her delicious rice balls! "Peace in Mindana ol."

profiles

Kelley Monts de Oca (Stage Manager) is a junior BA Theatre major from Reynoldsburg. Previous Otterbein credits include Assistant Stage Manager for *BecauseHeCan*, *Rounding Third*, and *The Pavilion*, and Stage Manager for *Swamp Baby*, *Crimes of the Heart*, *Prelude to a Kiss*, and *The 1940's Radio Hour*. She would like to thank the cast and crew for all of their hard work and commitment and Kathlene and Chrissy for their help and support.

Keeshon A. Morrow (Raybo) is a junior Musical Theater major from Piqua, OH. He was last seen at Forestburgh Playhouse, where his credits included *Hair* (Ronny), *Thoroughly Modern Millie* (Kenneth/ Police Man), *Annie* (Applesellee), *Carousel* and *Beauty and the Beast*. Otterbein Credits include *Daniel on a Thursday*, *Definitely Eric Greddis*, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Prelude to a Kiss*, and *Watchdog* where he originated the role of Carlos. Keeshon feels blessed to be working on this new play with Ms. Corthron and Chris. Thank yous go to the entire "Poetic" creative team, Coop, BFA '08, and to his friends and loving family. He would like to dedicate this performances to his own big brother, Teearii, who has always been there for him. "Love you Brother."

Matthew Reed (Parcel Carrier/Old Man 3/Dex/Husband) is a junior Music Business major from Westerville. He is making his collegiate premiere in *Poetic Pandemic*. He considers himself lucky to be a part of this great cast. He would like to thank his family for the loving support they have given him through the years.

Clare Schmidt (Joy/CR/Elderly Woman) is thrilled to be a part of this new work! She was last seen as Nuna in *Necessary Targets* and Rita in *Prelude to a Kiss*. She would like to thank Kia and Chris for bringing out her true colors!! Her mom, for flying all the way from Seattle to see her, the boys of 99 W. ParK St. and everybody in the cast and crew!

Raymond Thompson (Carson/Jacks/Parcel Carrier/Old Man 1/Walter/Nurse) is happy to have another opportunity to work with Chris Kirk. He is an Otterbein alumnus, whom you may have seen on stage here in *The Mikado*, *Kiss Me, Kate*, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, and *Medea*. His professional credits include a southern tour of *Pippin*, *Lost Highway*, *The Hank Williams Musical*, and *HONK!*, the musical version of the "Ugly Duckling." He would like to thank God for all His love and care, his family, Gwen, Nicole, his brothers of Pi Kappa Phi, and the memory of his father. "Last, for my rock Melissa Bell, without you, I die..."

upcoming events

WHILE WE WERE BOWLING

By: Carter W. Lewis (Otterbein College class of 1973)

Directed by: Ed Vaughan (Otterbein College class of 1971)

February 1-4, 8-10, 2007

Campus Center Theater, 100 W Home St.

A comedy, WHILE WE WERE BOWLING takes a strike at a rebellious family in the '50s torn between breaking a bowling record and breaking hearts. Meet Frances, a housewife who's beyond desperate, her husband Melvin, a third generation bowler, their children—Lydia, who rebelled even before she was born, and Brent, the “reigning king of the junior league bowlers.” As the saying goes, they put the FUN in dysfunctional. An unexpected house guest and a meddling uncle add to the mayhem. Carter W. Lewis is currently serving as Playwright-in-Residence/Lecturer at Washington University where he teaches Introduction to Playwriting, Advanced Playwriting and Dramaturgy.

Reminder:

The box office will be closed during the winter break, beginning November 20th. You may phone and leave messages at (614) 823-1109. The voicemail will be checked and messages returned once a week. The box office will open again for ticket sales on January 15th. Thank you for your patience.

We apologize for the inconvenience.